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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/080,672	02/25/2002	Katsutoshi Misuda	03500.016227	8154

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EXAMINER

FERGUSON, LAWRENCE D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1774

DATE MAILED: 06/29/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/080,672

Applicant(s)

MISUDA, KATSUTOSHI

Examiner

Lawrence D. Ferguson

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 14 March 2005.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-7 and 9-13 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) 13 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-7 and 9-12 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Interview

1. This action is in response to the interview held April 20, 2005.

Examiner indicated there is a 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, issue regarding instant claim 1 and will address the issue in this supplemental Office Action. Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-13 are pending, with claim 13 withdrawn as a non-elected invention.

The Action mailed May 23, 2005, was incorrectly classified as a Supplemental Advisory Action, where the case has a Non-Final status.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 1, 3-7 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 1, the phrase, "wherein the average particle size of a pigment (A) ... is smaller than the average particle size of a pigment (B)... wherein the pigment (A) has an average particle size of not larger than 1µm, and the pigment (B) has an average particle size ranging from 0.5µm to 10µm" is vague and indefinite because according to the later part of this phrase, both particle sizes can be 0.5µm to 1.0µm.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103(a)

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1, 3-7, 9 and 11-12, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirose et al. (U.S. 6,203,899) in view of EP 1048480 A1 (EP '480).

Hirose discloses an ink jet recording medium comprising a base material, ink receiving layer provided on the base material and a surface layer (dye fixing layer) provided on the ink receiving layer (column 2, lines 40-60) where the particles making up the surface layer fixes the coloring material component to the surface layer (column 3, lines 40-45 and column 4, lines 60-65). The ink receiving layer is equivalent to the claimed light reflecting layer because it contains light reflecting material, such as aluminum. The reference discloses the ink receiving layer includes pigments such as silica and alumina which are used singly or in combination, where it is preferable to use at least one selected from silica and alumina (column 5, lines 50-67). The surface layer of Hirose includes alumina hydrate (column 3, line 52 through column 4, line 12) where the particles are within a range of from 0 to 100 parts by weight (column 5, lines 34-40) and the surface layer has a 20 glossiness of 20% or higher (column 5, lines 45-49).

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Instant claim 12, the phrase, "an image forming method, comprising a step of conducting recording on the recording medium...by an ink-jet recording system" introduces a process limitation to the product claim. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process." *In re Thorpe*, 777 F.2d 695, 698, 227 USPQ 964, 966. Further, process limitations are given no patentable weight in product claims. Hirose does not disclose wherein the average particle size of the aluminum pigment is smaller than the average particle size of the silica pigment or barium sulfate.

EP '480 discloses an ink jet recording material comprising a carrier that has an underlayer and overlayer (dye-fixing layer), where the underlayer comprises barium sulfate and alumina or silicic material, where the alumina has a particle size of 50-150nm and silicic material has a particle size of 200-300nm (abstract). The light reflecting layer is equivalent to the underlayer because the underlayer comprises light reflecting material, such as aluminum. EP '480 discloses the material is glossy. Hirose and EP '480 are analogous art because they are both directed to ink jet recording material. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include barium sulfate in the ink receiving layer of Hirose to improve color density and provide good resistance to wiping (abstract). Neither reference teaches a refractive index of the recording medium, as in instant claim 6, this feature is directly related to the specific pigmented particles used. Since the references use the same barium sulfate in the

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underlayer and the same dye-fixing layer, respectively, the refractive index of the recording material would be expected to be the same as Applicant claims. Neither reference discloses the claimed content of particles having an average pigment particle size as in instant claim 10. The combined references do not show that the recording medium has the same particle sizes as instantly claimed. However, such particle sizes are properties which can be easily determined by one of ordinary skill in the art. With regard to the limitation of the particle sizes, absent a showing of unexpected results, it is obvious to modify the conditions of a composition because they are merely the result of routine experimentation. The experimental modification of prior art in order to optimize operation conditions (e.g. particle sizes) fails to render claims patentable in the absence of unexpected results. The particle sizes of the pigments are optimizable as they directly affect the opacity of the light reflecting layer. As such, they are optimizable. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to make the light reflecting layer with the limitations of the particle size of the pigments since it has been held that discovering an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art. (*In re Boesch*, 617 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980) and *Slaney*, 205 USPQ 215).

Response to Arguments

5. Arguments regarding rejection made under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirose et al. (U.S. 6,203,899) and EP 1048480 A1 have been considered but are unpersuasive. Applicant argues the relative sizes of pigments is

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neither taught nor suggested in either Hirose or EP '480. EP '480 discloses an ink jet recording material comprising a carrier that has an underlayer and overlayer (dye-fixing layer), where the underlayer comprises barium sulfate and alumina or silicic material, where the alumina has a particle size of 50-150nm and silicic material has a particle size of 200-300nm (abstract). Additionally, as previously mentioned, particle sizes are properties which can be easily determined by one of ordinary skill in the art. With regard to the limitation of the particle sizes, absent a showing of unexpected results, it is obvious to modify the conditions of a composition because they are merely the result of routine experimentation. The experimental modification of prior art in order to optimize operation conditions (e.g. particle sizes) fails to render claims patentable in the absence of unexpected results. The particle sizes of the pigments are optimizable as they directly affect the opacity of the light reflecting layer. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to make the light reflecting layer with the limitations of the particle size of the pigments since it has been held that discovering an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art. (*In re Boesch*, 617 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980) and *Slaney*, 205 USPQ 215). Applicant has not shown that Hirose or EP '480 cannot show this feature or the criticality of the particle size of the pigments.

Conclusion


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lawrence Ferguson whose telephone number is 571-


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272-1522. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 9:00 AM – 5:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Rena Dye, can be reached on 571-272-3186. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Lawrence Ferguson
Patent Examiner
AU 1774


RENA DYE
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
A.U. 1774 e/24/05